

Inspection of Ackworth Howard Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School

Station Road, Low Ackworth, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF7 7HH

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The Ackworth Howard vision is to provide opportunities for pupils to grow in mind, body and spirit. This vision is clearly evident throughout the school. The school community consistently lives out the school's Christian values of compassion, forgiveness, friendship and trust. Pupils are safe and happy. Pupils achieve well academically and they flourish in all aspects of their personal development. One parent described the school as a place that shapes 'really beautiful children who love to learn and have big world thinking'.

From early years onwards, pupils are exceptionally well behaved and consistently show kindness towards their fellow pupils and school staff. They are courteous and extremely polite. They are helpful to adults and to each other. In class, they pay close attention to their teachers and participate diligently with their learning. Pupils say that bullying does not happen in their school. Inspectors agree with this view. Pupils are confident that any poor behaviour would be resolved quickly and sensitively. They are rightly proud of their school and the part they play in its success.

The school is aspirational for pupils. Leaders have developed a rich, ambitious curriculum to inspire and engage pupils. Pupils say lessons are interesting and fun. Woven throughout the curriculum are experiences such as musical performances, sporting competitions and visits, such as a visit to Lindisfarne. These are designed to enrich pupils' life experience. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) study the same curriculum as their peers. They are fully included in the life of the school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the last inspection, leaders have taken extensive action to improve the curriculum for pupils. The curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced from early years to Year 6. In mathematics and English, the essential knowledge that all pupils need to learn has been identified. This includes pupils with SEND. Pupils make strong progress. They are well prepared for the next stage of their educational journey. The school's wider curriculum plans contain an extensive amount of knowledge. This has not been sequenced to show the essential knowledge pupils need to understand before they are ready to move on to the new learning. This makes it more difficult for adults to adapt the learning to meet pupils' needs in these subjects.

The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school. The school ensures that pupils revisit important knowledge and concepts over time. This allows them to continually build on prior learning. Teachers model methods and approaches to guide pupils through new learning. They use skilful questioning to check what pupils know and address gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly. Pupils are well prepared for their next stages of learning in mathematics.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use ongoing assessment well to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders rigorously check assessment data. They ensure that any pupil falling behind is quickly supported through the use of appropriate intervention. The support for pupils with SEND is effective. Pupils' needs are quickly identified and addressed so that they access the same curriculum as their peers.

In the early years, there is a clear focus on communication and language. Adults support children to develop into confident and inquisitive learners. Leaders have created a rich and inviting learning environment indoors and out. Adults inspire and motivate children with creative and imaginative tasks. Children make swift and effective progress in reading and mathematics. However, some children do not form their letters correctly. Progress in writing is not as strong. Despite this, children are well prepared for Year 1.

Reading is extremely important. Staff deliver the phonics programme consistently well. Teachers are well trained to teach early reading. Pupils learn to read quickly and accurately. Any child who needs extra support receives additional, daily tuition. Pupils enjoy reading. Reading ambassadors support younger children to read and create mini libraries around themes and authors. Pupils make exceptional progress in reading.

Extensive work around core themes such as diversity and social justice prepares pupils to be socially aware and actively challenge injustice. The personal development programme, including pupils' character development, is exemplary. Pupils are agents for change, committed to doing good and supporting others. They make cards and letters for hospital patients, raise significant funds for their link school in Tanzania and organise litter picks in the local community. Leaders explain that pupil leadership is the heartbeat of the school. They understand that they do not have to wait to give service to others. Pupils live up to leaders' high expectations.

Leaders, including governors, are passionate about providing the best educational experience for the pupils at Ackworth Howard. They provide highly effective professional development opportunities for all staff. Staff well-being and workload are a priority for leaders. Staff are immensely proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Across the wider curriculum, the school has not identified the essential knowledge it wants all pupils, including those with SEND, to know and remember. This means that teachers are not clear which knowledge is most important when planning

activities. Work is not as well matched to some pupils' needs as it could be. The school needs to identify the essential knowledge in all foundation subjects so that work can be tailored to meet pupils' needs, allowing them to purposefully build new learning on what they know and remember.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	130977
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10313560
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lorna Malkin
Headteacher	Michael Walker
Website	www.ackworthhowardschool.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 March 2020

Information about this school

- The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was in January 2024. The school's next section 48 inspection is expected to be within eight school years.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a

sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also looked at curriculum documentation and a sample of pupils' work in science, religious education and art and design.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body, a representative from the local authority and spoke with a representative from the Diocese of Wakefield.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils to gather their views on school life.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents from responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.
- To gather the views of staff, inspectors took account of responses to the staff survey and met with staff teams.

Inspection team

Tracy Duffy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andy Taylor

Ofsted Inspector

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